

A
RELATION
Of the fearful Estate
OF
FRANCIS SPIRA,
In the Year 1548.

Compiled by Nat. Bacon Esq;

Prov. 14. 14.

The Back-slider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.

L O N D O N,

Printed by T. Ratcliff and N Thompson,
for Edward Thomas, at the Adam
and Eve in Little Britain, 1672.

A
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OF THE

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FRANCIS SPICKARD

In the Year 1748

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at the New York Office of the
Printer of the City of New York

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THE

PREFACE:

FOR truth of this History ensuing, besides circumstances of Place, Person, Time, Occasion, & exactly observed, I refer my self to the relation of those Godly men, who in several Languages have manifested to the world the several passages thereof: and although I am not ignorant,

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that

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that at the first they were not onely not credited, but also discredited and slandered, by such as found them to be a Blur to the *Roman* Profession, yet they lost not their lustre thereby; but being acquitted by many Compurgators of several Nations, and some of the *Romish* Religion, being all of them Spectators of this Tragedy, it occasioned not onely a further manifestation and confirmation of the truth, but also a large and more frequent confluence, to see that which they

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they had formerly onely heard of. This partly appeareth out of the Succeeding Story : but more fully out of an Apology written by *Vergerius*, Bishop of *Justinople*, who was accused for dispersing the Fame of his Example to the stain of Popery; in which Apology to *N. Rottan*, Suffragan of *Padua*, is shortly and plainly declared, what was said, what was done, and who were present. If that it be demanded, what moved me to compile this Treatise of *Spira*, tell them, that it

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should teach fear and reverence; and indeed among all those that come to see him, few or none return unshaken. *Vergerius* in his first Epistle saith, I would fain go see him again, but I exceedingly fear and tremble; and in his Apology saith, it is such a rare Example, as I would willingly go to the furthest parts of the World to hear or see the like. The Lady *Jane* to her Fathers Chaplain (that had fallen into *Spira's* sin) saith, Remember the lamentable estate of
Spira.

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Spira. I acknowledge that there hath been formerly a Book published in our Mother tongue, concerning this subject; but as far as I can learn (for I could never yet obtain any of them) it was nothing so large and various as this present Treatise, and as I have heard, a translation of only one of the Tractates from whence I have gathered this present discourse in part. Concerning my Care and Fidelity in this business, it is such, as I may truly say without changing of colour, that there is

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not one sentence of all this Work attributed unto the person of *Spira*, but it hath its Warrant, either from the Epistles of *Vergerius* and *Gribaldus*, Professors of the Law at *Padua*; or from the discourses of *Henry Soringer* a Scotch Man, *Sigismund Gelons* a Transilvanian, and *Mart. Bocha* a Divine of *Basil*; neither have I taken any other liberty then as a relation to weave the foresaid Discourses one within another, so as those which under several Writers were before counted
several,

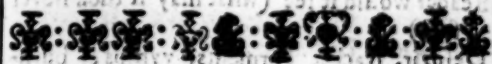
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several, are now by my endeavours reduced into one intire History, connexed by due succession of time and occasion, as Punctually as could be aimed at, by the circumstances noted in the Writings of those holy and learned men before named.

N. B.

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T O



TO THE
AUTHOR and READER
OF THIS
HISTORY.

SOME scattered parcels of this Story lay
in Foreign Papers; which hadst not found a

Thus to collect, had { been obvious prey,
Never seen the day.

Reader, wouldst see how sinning against the
Will quench and leave the soul in a sad night
Of discontent. Come hither Reader then, look
And learn light-quenching sins to fear.

Reader, wouldst see the comfort breathing
To grieve, what curfless grief it doth demerit
Come hither then, look here.

Here see a soul that's all despair; a man
All Hell; a Spirit all wound; who can
-A wounded spirit bear?

Reader

Reader would'st see (what may'st thou never
see)

Delpair, Racks, Torments, vyb's of burn-
ing steel?

Come then, look here.

Behold this man, this furnace, in whose
heart

Sin hath created Hell: Oh, in each part
What Flames appear!

His thoughts all stings, words, swords, brim-
stone his breath,

His sight flames, vvishes curses life, a death:

A thousand deaths lye in him, he not dead,

A breathing course in living scalding lead:

And yet he lives our Monument, to tell

How black are quenched lights;

Quencht joyes are double frights;

Black dayes are double nights;

Heaven tasted, lost, a double Hell.

I have call'd thee Reader, pray so be,

Read this, that others read not thee.

Legas Historiam

Ne fas Historia.

M. N.

Extra.

EXtraordinary Examples of
Divine Justice, GOD
never intended for a
nine dayes wonder; else would
he, when he exemplified *Lots*
Wife, have turned her into a
Statue of melting Snow, not
of lasting Salt; which stood,
as *Iosephus* tells us, till his Age,
after the Destruction of *Jeru-*
salem, and as some Travellers
report, till at this day, *ut quod-*
dam hominibus prestaret condi-
mentum, quo sapiant unde illud
cautatur exemplum: Aug. de
Civit. Dei, lib. 16. cap. 30. for
a season against corruption, a
preservative against Apostacy.
This Tragedy, when fresh and
new, was the conversion and
confirmation of sundry Wor-
thies.

thies *Vergerius*, a dayly specta-
tor thereof, forsaking a rich
Bishoprick of *Iustinopolis*, and
rents of Antichrist, went to *Basel*,
and dyed a worthy protestant:
many Nations had Eye wit-
nesses of their own Students
then in the University of *Padua*,
who penned the story, the
Copies whereof are frequently
revived: our English ones
were very defective, and now
worn out of shops and hands;
sundry manuscripts of this
abroad, imperfect; which
moved me to compare this la-
bour of a worthy Gentleman
(who faithfully translated it
out of *Italian*, *French*, and *Dutch*
Letters) with the *Latine* of
Colius Secundus, *Curio*, *Matthe-*
us Græbanellus, professors of the
Civil Law in *Padua*: *Sigis-*
mond Gelons a *Transylvanian*,
Henricus

Henricus Scetus, all daily Visitors of *Spira*, and find it accord with them. Touching *Spira's* Person, I find most learned Writers do incline to the right and hopeful hand; moved by his sweet, humble, and charitable speeches; some few desperate ones excepted, that fell from him in some little agonies, which kept him fasting and watching about six moneths space, eating nothing but what was forced down his throat. The summe of *Calvins* and *Borrhaus* their counsels is, (who writs largely of the use of this patern) that all learn to take heed of backsliding, which Gods soul abhors, and not to dally with Conscience, an Hell on Earth, if justly incensed; more to be feared than the Spanish Inquisition, or all the Strapadoes & torments in the world; and

and to take heed of *Spira's*
principall Errors, which were,
to dispute with Satan over-
busily in time of weakness,
especially to reason, and con-
clude from present sense, to
Gods past Reprobation, and fu-
ture Damnation: both which is
hard, if possible, for any man to
determine in his own, much
more in others cases. So com-
mending thee to his grace, who
is able to establish thee to the
end, I bid thee farewell, and
hope well, while the space of
Grace lasteth: *Dum Spiras,*
spera; so mayest thou take good,
and no hurt, by the reading of
this terrible Example,

Which God will
behold with
kindness
and mercy
more than the
strict
punishment
of the world
and



RELATION

Of the Fearful

Estate of

FRANCIS SPIRA.



IN the Year, 1548.
when the glorious
Sun of the Gospel
was but newly ri-
sen in *Europe*, in
the dayes of the Reign of *Ed-
ward* the sixth of that Name,
King of **ENGLAND**, in
the Territory, and under the
Jurisdiction of the City of
Venice, being the very border
of *Italy*, in the town of *Citta-
della*,

della, lived one *Francis Spira*, a Civill Lawyer an Advocate of great rank and esteem, being of known learning and eloquence, of great experience, of carriage circumspect and severe, his speech grave and composed, his countenance sharp and austere, every way befitting that authority whereunto he was advanced, endowed with outward blessings of Wife and eleven children, and wealth in abundance. What his worst parts were, I have no other warrant than his own words, which (if not tainted overmuch with the bitterness of a desperate mind, and bearing a countenance rather of passion than of sober confession) may seem to add a period to all further commendations.

I was (saith he) excessively covetous of money, and accordingly applied my self to get by injustice, corrupting justice by deceit, inventing tricks to delude justice; good causes I either defended deceitfully, or sold them to the adversary perfidiously; ill causes I maintained with all my might; I wittingly opposed the known truth; and the trust committed unto me I either betrayed or perverted. Thus haveing worn out fourty four years, or thereabouts, and the news of the new or, rather newly revived Opinions of Luther coming into those parts, represented an object of novelty unto him; who being as desirous to know, as he was famous for knowledge, suffered not these wandring opinions to pass

pass unexamined; but searching into the Scriptures; and into all Bookes of Controversies that he could get, both old and new, and finding more then same or opinion, he began to taste their nature so well, as he entertaines, loves, and ownes them at length; and with such zeal, as he became a professor, yea a teacher of them, first to his Wife, Children; and Family, and after to his Friends, and familiar acquaintance, and in comparison, seemed to neglect all other Affairs; intending ever to presse this maine point, that *We must wholly, and onely depend on the free and unchangeable love of GOD in the death of Christ, as the onely sure way to salvation*: and this was the summe of all his discourse, and this continued for the space

of fix years, or thereabouts, even so long as this fire could keepe it self within private walls; but at length, it brake forth into publick meetings, so as the whole Province of *Padua* dawned by the lustre thereof. The Clergy finding the trade of their pardons to decay, and their purgatory to wax cold, began to bestirre themselves; glosing their actions, first, with calumnious aspersions upon the whole profession; then more plainly striking at *Spira* with greivous accusation. And to effect their purpose, some promise labour, others favour, some advice, others maintenance; all joyne to divide, either his soul from his body, or both from God.

Now was *John Casa*, the Popes Legate, resident at *Venice*,

nice, being by birth a *Florentine*, and one that wanted neither malice against those of this way, nor craftiness to effect his malicious purposes; to him these men repair with out-cries against *Spira*, that he was the man that condemned the received Rites of the Church, deluded the Ecclesiastical power, and scandalized the policy thereof; one of no mean ranck, being a man of account and authority, and thereunto learned in the Scriptures, elegant in speech, and in one word a dangerous *Lutheran*, having also many Disciples, and therefore not to be despised.

Ar this began the *Legate* to cast his eye on the terrible alteration that lately had happened in *Germany*; where, by the meanes

meanes of one only *Luther*, the Romish Religion had suffered such a blow, as that it could neither be cured by dissimulation, nor defended by power; but the Clergy must either mend their manners, or lose their dignities. On the other side, when he saw how propense the common people, inhabiting in the bordering Country of *Italy*, were to entertain those new opinions, now thought it no time to dispute or perswade, but with speed repaires to the *Senate*, and procures authority from them to send to *Spira*.

Spira by this time had considered with himself of the nature of his courage, how evident and notorious it was, and therefore subject to be envied by such, as neither liked his

his Person nor Religion; he perceived that his Opinions were neither retired, nor speculative, but such as aimed at the overthrow of the *Rottish* Faction, and a change of policy; and that his Enemies wanted neither power nor occasion, to call him to an account in publick, when he must either *Apostatize*, and shamefully give his former life; yea, his own conscience, the lie, or endure the utmost malice of his deadly Enemies; or forsake his Wife, Children, Friends, Goods, Authority, yea, his Dear Countrey, and betake himself to a forreign people, there to endure a thousand miseries, that do continually wait upon a voluntary exile.

Being

Being thus distracted, and tossed in the restless Waves of doubt, without guide to trust to, or Heaven to fly to for succour, on the suddain, GOD'S Spirit assisting, he felt a calm and began to discourse with himself, in this matter.

Why wandrest thou thus in uncertainties, unhappy man? cast away fear, put on thy shield, the shield of faith: Where is thy wonted courage, thy goodness, thy constancy? remember that Christs glory lies at the stake: suffer thou without fear, & he will defend thee, he will tell thee what thou shalt answer, he can beat down all danger; bring thee out of Prison, raise thee from the dead: consider Peter in a dungeon, the Martyrs in the Fire; if thou mak'st a good confession, thou maist indeed go to prison, or death, but an eternal reward in Heaven

B

remains

10 A relation of the Fearful

remaines for thee; What hast thou in this world comparable to Eternal life, to everlasting happiness? If thou dost otherwise, think of the scandal; (common people live by example, thinking whatever is done is well done) fear the loss of peace and joy, fear hell, death and eternal wrath; or if the flesh be so strong, as to cause thee to doubt of the issue, fly thy Countrey, get thee away, though never so far, rather then deny the Lord of Life.

Now was Spira in reasonable quiet, being resolved to yield to these weighty reasons. Yet holding it wisdom to examine all things, he consults also with flesh and blood; thus the battle doth renew, and the flesh begins in this manner; Be well advised, for man, consider reasons on both sides.

side

sides, and then Judge: how canst thou thus overcome thine own sufficiency, as thou neither regardst the examples of thy Progenitors, nor the Judgment of the whole Church? dost thou not consider, what misery this thy rashness will bring thee unto? thou shalt lose all thy substance, gotten with so great care and travell, thou shalt undergo the most exquisite torments that malice it self can devise, thou shalt be counted an Heritick of all, and to close up all, thou shalt die shamefully. What thinkest thou of the loathsome stinking dungeon, the bloody axe, the burning, fagot? Are they delightfull? Be wise at length, and keep thy life and honour; thou mayest live to do much good to good men, as God commands thee; thou mayest be an ornament to thy Countrey,

12 *A relation of the Fearful*

and put case the Countries loss would be of small esteem with thee, wilt thou bring thy friends also into danger? thou hast begotten children, wilt thou now cut their throats, and inhumanely butcher them, who may in time bring honour to their Country, glory to God, help and furtherance to his Church? go to the Legat, weak man, freely confess thy fault and help all these miseries. Thus did the cares of this World, and the deceitfulness of Riches, choak the good Seed that was formerly sown: so as fearing, he faints, and yields unto the allurements of this present world; and being thus blinded he goes to the Legat at Venice, and salutes him with this news.

Having for these diverse years

years entertained an opinion concerning some Articles of faith, contrary to the Orthodox and received judgment of the Church, and uttered many things against the authority of the Church of Rome, and the universal Bishop, I humbly acknowledge my fault and error, and my folly in misleading others; I therefore yield my self in all obedience to the Supream Bishop into the bosome of the Church of Rome, never to depart again from the Traditions and decrees of the holy See; I am heartily sorry for what is past, and I humbly beg pardon for so great an offence.

The Legat perceiving Spira to faint, he pursues him to the utmost; he causes a recitation of all his Errours to be drawn in Writing, together

with the Confession annexed to it. And commands *Spira* to subscribe his name there, which accordingly he did; then the *Legate* commands him to return to his own Town, and there to declare this confession of his, and to acknowledge the whole Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, to be holy, and true, and to abjure the Opinions of *Luther* and other such Teachers, as false, and Heretical; *Man knows the beginning of sin but who bounds the issues thereof?* *Spira* having once lost footing, goes down amain, he cannot stay nor gain-say the *Legate*, but promiseth to accomplish his whole will and pleasure: he soon addresseth himself for his Journey: and being onward in the way, be-thinks

thinks himself of the large spoils he had brought away, from the conflict with the Legate; what glorious testimony he had given of his great Faith, and constancy in Christ's cause; and to be plain, how impiously he had denied Christ, and his Gospel at Venice; and what he promised to do further in his own Country: and thus partly with fear, and partly with shame being confounded, he thought he heard a voyce speaking unto him, in this manner.

Spira, What dost thou here? Whither goest thou? haste thou, unhappy man, given thy band-writing to the Legate at Venice? yet see thou dost not seal it in thy owne Countrey. Dost thou indeed think eternal Life so

mean, as that thou preferrest
this present life before it? dost
thou well in preferring wife
and children before Christ? is
the windy applause of the peo-
ple, better indeed then the glo-
ry of God? and the possession of
this Worlds good more dear
to thee, then the salvation of
thine own soul? is the small use
of a moment of time more desi-
rable, then eternal wrath is
dreadful? think with thyself,
what Christ endured for thy
sake is it not equal thou shouldst
suffer somewhat for him? Re-
member man, that the sufferings
of this present life are not com-
parable to the glory that shall
be revealed. If thou sufferest
with him, thou shalt also reign
with him: thou canst not an-
swer for what thou hast already
done, nevertheless the gate of
mercy

'mercy is not quite shut. Take heed that thou heapest not sin upon sin, lest thou repent when it will be too late.

Now was *Spira* in a Wilderness of doubt, not knowing which way to turn him, nor what to do; yet being arrived in his own Country, and amongst his friends, what he had done, and what he had further promised to do, and how the terrour of God on the one side, and the terrour of this World on the other side, did continually rack him; and therefore he desired of them advice in this so doubtful a case: His friends, upon small deliberation answered: that it was requisite he should take heed that he did not in any wise betray his wife and children; and all his friends, into

B 5 danger

danger, seeing, that by so small a matter as the reciting of a little Schedule, which might be done in less space then half an hour, he might both free himself from present danger, and preserve many that depend upon him; adding moreover, that he could get no credit in relenting from that which he had already in greatest part Performed before the *Legate* at *Venice*, and that in the perfect accomplishing thereof, little or no discredit could arise, more then what by the former action already he had sustained; on the other side, if he did not perform his promise made to the *Legate*, he could neither discharge himself of the shame which he had already incurred, nor avoid farre more

more heavy and insupportable injuries, then probably he should have endured, if he had persisted obstinately in his former Opinions.

This was the last blow of the battle; and Spira utterly overcome, goes to the Prætor, and profers to performe his promise made to the *Legat*, who in the meane time, had taken order to have all things ready, and had sent the instrument of abjuration signed by Spira, to the Prætor, by the hands of a certain Priest. All that night the miserable man wears out with restless cares, without any minute of rest, the next morning being come, he gets up, and being ready, he desperately enters into the publick Congregation, where Mass being finished, in the presence

presence of friends and Enemies, and of the whole Assembly, being by estimation near two thousand people, yea and of Heaven it self, he recites that infamous abjuration, word for word as it was written, it being done, he was fined at thirty pieces of gold, which he presently paid, five whereof were given to the Priest that brought the abjuration, the other twenty-five were imployed towards the making of a Shrine to put the Eucharist in; then was he sent home, restored to his Dignities, Goods, Wife, and Children: No sooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a dreadful voice, saying to him, *Thou wicked wretch, thou hast denied me, thou hast renounced the covenant of thy obedience, thou hast*
broken

broken thy Vow; hence Apostate,
 bear with thee the sentence of thy
 eternal damnation; he trem-
 bling and quaking in body and
 mind, fell down in a swoond:
 relief was at hand for the bo-
 dy, but from that time for-
 ward he never found any peace
 or ease of mind, but continu-
 ing in uncessant torments, he
 protested that he was captived
 under the revenging hand of
 the great God, that he heard
 continually that fearful sen-
 tence of Christ that just Judge,
 that he knew he was utterly
 undone; that he could neither
 hope for Grace, nor Christ's in-
 tercession with God the Father
 in his behalf; thus was his fault
 ever heavy on his heart, and
 ever his Judgment before his
 eyes.

Now began his friends,
 some

some of them, to repent too late of their rash counsell: others not looking so high as the Judgment of God, laid all the blame on his Melancholick constitution; that overshadowing his Judgment, wrought in him a kind of madness: every one censured as his fancy led him, yet for remedy all agreed in this, to use both the wholefom help of Physitians, and the pious advice of Divines, and therefore thought it meet to convey him to *Padua*, an University of note, where plenty of all manner of meanes was to be had; this they accordingly did, both with his wife, Children, and whole family, others also of his friends accompanying him; and being arived at the house of one *James Ardin*, in *Saint*

Saint *Leonards* Parish, they sent for three Physicians of most note, who upon due observation of the effects, and of other Symptoms of his disease, and some private conference one with another, amongst themselves, returned their verdict in this manner, *viz.* That they could not discern that his body was afflicted with any danger or distemper Originally from it self, by reason of the over-ruling of any humour; but that this Malady of his did arise from some grief or passion of his mind, which being over-burdened did so oppress the spirits, as they wanting free passage, stirred up many ill humours, whereof the body of man is full, and these ascending up into the brain, troubled the fancy, shadowed

shadowed the seat of the judgment, and so corrupted it. This was the state of his disease, and that outward part that was visible to the eye of nature; this they endeavoured to reform by purgation, either to consume, or at least to divert the course of those humours from the brain; but all their skill effected nothing, which *Spira* noting, said, *Alas poor men! how far wide are you? do you think that this disease is to be cured by potions? believe me there must be another manner of medicine; it is neither plaisters nor drugs, that can help a fainting soul cast down with the sence of sin, and wrath of God; 'tis onely Christ that must be the Physitian and the Gospel the souls Antidote.*

The Physicians easily believed

lieved him, after they had understood the whole truth of the matter, and therefore they wished him to seek some spiritual comfort. By this time the fame of this man was spread over all *Padua*, and the neighbour Country; partly for that he was a man of Esteem; partly because as the disease, for the occasion was especially remarkable; for this was not done in a corner; so as dayly there came multitudes of all sorts to see him; some out of curiosity, onely to see and discourse; some out of a pious desire to try all meanes, that might reduce him to comfort againe: or at least to benefit themselves by such a spectacle of misery, and of the justice of God. Amongst these *Paulus Vergerius* Bishop of *Justi-*

Justinopolis and *Mattheus Grimbaldus*, deserve especially to be named as the most principall labourers for this mans comfort. They find him now about fifty years of age, neither affected with the dotage of old age, nor with the unconstant head-strong passion of youth, but in the strength of his experience and judgment; in a burning heat, calling excessively for drink; yet his understanding active, quick of apprehension, witty in discourse above his ordinary manner, and judiciously apposite; his Friends laboured with him him by all fair means to receive some nourishment, which he obstinately gain-saying, they forcibly infused some liquid sustenance into his mouth, most of which he spit out again.

gain, exceedingly chafing, and
in this fretting mood of his,
said, 'As it is true that all things
'work for the best to those that
'love God; so to the wicked all
'are contrary: for whereas a plen-
'tiful off-spring is the Blessing
'of God, and his reward, being a
'stay to the weak estate of their
'aged parents, to me they are a
'cause of bitterness and vexati-
'on, they do strive to make me
'tire out this misery, I would
'fain be at an end; I deserve not
'this dealing at their hands;
'Oh! that I were gone from,
'hence, that some body would
'let out this weary Soul.

His friends saluted him, and
asked him, what he conceived
to be the cause of his disease;
forthwith he brake out into a
lamentable discourse of the
passages formerly related, and
that

that with such passionate Elocution, that he caused many to weep, and most to tremble. They contrarily, to comfort him, propounded many of God's promises recorded in the Scripture, and many examples of God's mercy: My sin (said he) is greater then the mercy of God. Nay answered they, the mercy of God is above all sin; God would have all men to be saved; It's true (quoth he) he would have all that he hath elected to be saved; he would not have damned Reprobates to be saved: I am one of that number, I know it, for I willingly and against my knowledge denied Christ, and I feel that he hardens, and will not suffer me to hope.

After some silence, one asked him, whether he did not believe

estate of Francis Spira.

believe that Doctrine to be true, for which he was accused before the Legat? He answered *I did believe it when I denied it but now I neither believe that, nor the doctrine of the Roman Church: I believe nothing, I have no faith, no trust, no hope; I am a Reprobate like Cain or Judas, who casting away all hope of mercy, fell into despair; and my friends do me great wrong, that they suffer me not to go to the place of Unbelievers, as I justly deserve.*

Here they began sharply to rebuke him; requiring, and charging him, that in any wise he did not violate the mercy of God, to which he answered, 'The mercy of God is exceeding large, and extends to all the Elect, but not to me, or any like to me, who are sealed up
'to

‘to wrath; I tell you I deserve it,
‘my own conscience condemns
‘me, what needeth any other
‘Juge? Christ came (say they)
to take away sin, *Rom. 2. 15.* and
calling for a book, they read un-
to him the Passion of Christ; and
coming to his nailing to the
Cross, *Spira* said, ‘This indeed
‘is comfortable to such as are
‘Elected, but as for me wretch,
‘they are nothing but grief and
‘torment, because I contemned
‘them. Thus roaring for grief,
and tossing himself up and
down upon the bed as he lay,
he entreated them to read no
more. As *Gribauidus*, was com-
ing to see him, *Vergerius* said
to *Spira* dear Sir, here is
Doctor Gribauidus, a godly and
faithful friend of yours, come
to see you. He is welcome
(said he) but he shall find
‘me

me ill: *Grihauldus* replied,
Sir, this is but an illusion of
the Devil, who doth what he
can to vex you; but turn you
to God with your whole
heart, and he is ready to shew
you mercy; the Lord you
know is full of mercy, it is
he that hath said, that as often
as a sinner repents of his sin, he
will remember his sin no more.
Consider this in the Example
of Peter, that was Christs fami-
liar, and an Apostle, and yet
denied him thrice with an
Oath, and yet God was merci-
ful unto him: *Said* Consider
the Thief that spent his whole
life in wickedness, and for all
that, did not God graciously
respect him in the last minute
of his life? Is the Lords hand
now shortned, that it cannot
save? To this *Spira* answered:
If

‘ If Peter grieved and repented,
‘ it was because Christ beheld
‘ him with a merciful eye: and
‘ in that he was pardoned, it was
‘ not because he wept, but be-
‘ cause God was gracious to him;
‘ but God respects not me, and
‘ therefore I am a Reprobate; I
‘ feel no comfort can enter into
‘ my heart; there’s place there
‘ only for torments and vexing
‘ of spirit; I tell you my case is
‘ properly mine own, no man
‘ was ever in the like plight and
‘ therefore my estate is fearful.
Then roaring out in the bit-
terness of his spirit, said, *It’s*
a fearful thing to fall into the
hands of the living God; the vio-
lence of his passion and action
suitable, did amaze many of
the Beholders; inſomuch as
ſome of them ſaid with a
whiſpering voice, that he was
poſſeſſed

possessed, he over-hearing it,
said; 'Do you doubt it? I have a
' whole Legion of Devils that
' up their dwelling within me,
' and possess me as their own;
' and justly too, for I have denied
' Christ. Whether did you that
willingly or not? (said they)
' That's nothing to the purpose
' (said *Spira*) Christ saith whoso-
' ever denies me before men, him
' will I denie before my Father
' which is in Heaven; Christ
' will not be denied, no not in a
' word; and therefore it is e-
' nough, though in heart I ne-
' ver denied him.

They observing his distemper to
arise from the sense and horror of
the pains of Hell, asked him whe-
ther he thought there were worse
pains then what he endured for
the present, he said that he knew
there were far worse pains then

C

those

‘ those that he then suffered, for
‘ the wicked shall rise to their
‘ judgment, but they shall not
‘ stand in judgment, (*Psal. 1.*)
‘ this I tremble to think of, yet
‘ do I desire nothing more, than
‘ that I might come to that place
‘ where I may be sure to feel the
‘ worst and to be freed from fear
‘ of worse to come.

I, but you are to consider (said
one) that those Opinions for
which you were accused before
the *Legat.*, were impious, and
therefore you are not to think
you denied Christ, but rather
that you confessed him, ac-
knowledging the infallible truth
of the Catholick Church ‘ Tru-
‘ ly (said he) when I did deny
‘ those Opinions, I did think
‘ them to be true, and yet I did
‘ deny them.

Go to (said others) now
then

then believe that they are true.
' Now I cannot (said he) God
' will not suffer me to believe
' them, nor trust in his mercy;
' what would you have me to
' do? I would fain attain to this
' power, but cannot, though I
' should presently be burnt for
' it. But why do you; said the
other, esteem this so grievous a
sin, when as the learned *Legat*
constrained you to it; which
he surely would not have done,
if your former Opinions had
not been erroneous: No, good
Francis, the Devil besets thee,
let not therefore the grievous-
ness of thy sin (if any such
be) amaze thee. You say right
(replied he) the Devil hath
possessed me, and God hath left
me to his power; for I find
I can neither believe the Gos-
pel, nor trust in God's mercy,

36 *A relation of the Fearful*

‘I have sinned against the holy
‘Ghost, and God by his immuta-
‘ble decree hath bound me over
‘to perpetual punishment with-
‘out any hope of pardon. Its true
‘that the greatness of sin, nor the
‘multitude of them, bind not
‘Gods mercy; all those sins that
‘in the former part of my life I
‘have committed, then did not
‘so much trouble me; for I trust-
‘ed God would not lay them to
‘my charge; now having sin’d a-
‘gainst the holy Ghost, God hath
‘taken away from me all power
‘of repentance, & brings all my
‘sins to remembrance; and guilty
‘of one guilty of all. And there-
‘fore its no matter whether my
‘sins be great or small few or ma-
‘ny; they be such as Christs blood
‘nor Gids mercy belongs to me.
‘God will have mercy on whom
‘he will have mercy; and
whom

‘whom he will he hardneth ;
‘this is it that gnaws my heart,
‘he that hardned me ; and I
‘find that he daily more and
‘more doth harden me, and
‘therefore I am out of hope ; I
‘feel it, therefore cannot but
‘despair. I tell you there was ne-
‘ver such a Monster as I am, ne-
‘ver was any man alive a specta-
‘cle of exceeding misery. I knew
‘that justification is to be expe-
‘cted by Christ, and I denied and
‘abjured it, to the end I might
‘keep this frail life from adver-
‘sity, and my children from po-
‘verty : and now behold how
‘bitter this life is to me, & God
‘on’y knows what shall become
‘of this my Family ; but sure no
‘good is likely to betide it, but
‘worse and worse, and such a
‘ruine at length, as one stone
‘shall not be left upon another.

But why should you (said Gri-
bouldus) conceit so deeply of
your sin, seeing you cannot but
know, that many have denied
Christ, yet never fell into de-
spair? Well (said he) I can see
‘no ground of comfort for
‘such, neither can I warrant
‘them from Gods revenging
‘hand in wrath, though it plea-
‘seth God yet to suffer such to
‘be in peace: and besides, there
‘will a time of danger come and
‘then they shall be thorowly
‘tried; and if it werenot so, yet
‘God is just in making me an
‘example to others and I cannot
‘justly complain; there is no
‘punishment so great but I have
‘deserved it; for this so heinous
‘offence. I assure you it is no
‘small matter to deny Christ,
‘and yet it is more ordinary then
‘commonly men do conceive of;

' it is not a denial made before a
 ' Magistrate as it is with me, for
 ' as oft as a Christian doth dis-
 ' semble the known truth; as of-
 ' ten as he approves of false wor-
 ' ship by presenting himself at it,
 ' so often as he hath not things
 ' worthy of his calling, or doth
 ' such things as are unworthy of
 ' his calling, so often he denies
 ' Christ; thus did I and therefore
 ' am justly punished for it. Your
 Estate (quoth *Gribouldus*) is not
 so strange as you make it. *Job*
 was so far gone, that he com-
 plained God had set him as a
 mark against him; and *David*
 that was a man after Gods own
 heart, complained often that
 God had forsaken him, and was
 become his Enemy, yet both
 received comfort again. Com-
 fort your self therefore, God
 will come at length, though
 C 4 he

he now seem farr of.

O Brother (answered Spira) I believe all this, the Devils believe and tremble; but David was ever Elected, and dearly beloved of God; and though he fell, yet God took not utterly away his holy Spirit, and therefore was heard when he prayed, Lord take not thy holy spirit from me: but I am in another case, being ever accursed from the presence of God; neither can I pray as he did, because his holy Spirit is quite gone, and cannot be recalled; and therefore I know I shall live in continually hardness so long as I live, Oh that I might feel but the least sense of the love of God to me, though but for one small moment, as I now feel his heavy wrath that burns like the torments of Hell within me, and afflicts my conscience with pangs
unuttera-

*unutterable : verily Desperation
is Hell it self.*

Here *Gribauldus* said, I do verily believe, *Spira*, that God having so severely chastised you in this life, correcteth you in mercy here, that he may spare you hereafter, and that he hath mercy sealed up for you in time to come.

Nay (said *Spira*) hence do I know that I am a Reprobate, because he afflicteth me with hardness of heart: O that my body had suffered all my life long, so that he would be pleased to release my soul, and ease my conscience, this burthened conscience.

Gribauldus being desirous to ease his mind from the continual meditation of his sins; as also to sound how for the present he stood affected to the Romish Church, asked him

what he thought became of the souls of men so soon as they departed out of the body; to which he answered:

‘ Although this be not so fully
‘ revealed in Scripture, yet I ve-
‘ rily believe that the souls of the
‘ Elect go presently to the King-
‘ dom of glory, and not that they
sleep with the body, as some do
imagine:

Very well said one of the Sep-
tators, why do the Scriptures
then say (1 Sam. 5. 9.) that God
brings down to Hell, and raiseth
up, seeing it cannot be meant
of the estate of the soul after
death, which as thou saiest ei-
ther goeth to Heaven without
change, or to Hell without Re-
demption; it must be under-
stood of the Estate of the soul
in this life, like that wherein
thou art at this present: and
often

oftentimes we see that God suffers men to fall into the jaws of despair, and yet raiseth them up again; and therefore despair not, but hope; it shall be even thus with thee in his good time.

This is the work (quoth Spira) this the labour; for I tell you when I at Venice did first adure my profession, and so, as it were, drew an Indenture, the Spirit of God often admonished me; and when at Citadella I did as it were set to my seal, the Spirit of God often suggested to me, do not write Spira, do not seal: yet I resisted the holy Ghost, and did both: and at that very present I did evidently feel a wound inflicted in my very will: so although I can say, I would believe, yet can I not say I will believe. God hath denied me the power of
will,

will, and it befalls me in this
 my miserable Estate, as with one
 that is fast in Irons, and his
 friends coming to see him, do
 pity his Estate, and do perswade
 him to shake off his fetters, and
 to come out of his bonds, which
 God knows he would faine do,
 but cannot; this is my very case,
 you perswade me to believe, how
 faine would I do it, but cannot.
 O now I cannot. Then violent-
 ly grasping his hands toge-
 ther, and raising himself up.
 Behold (said he) I am strong,
 yet by little and little I decay and
 consume; and my servants would
 faine preserve this weary life,
 but at length the will of God must
 be done, and I shall perish mise-
 rably, as I deserve. Rejoyce ye
 Righteous in the Lord, blessed are
 you whose hearts the Lord hath
 mollified.

Then

Then after some pause, "It's
wonderful, I earnestly desire to
pray to God with my heart,
yet I cannot; I see my dam-
nation, and I know my reme-
dy is only in Christ, yet I can-
not for my self to take hold on
him: such are the punishments
of the damned; they repent of
their loss of Heaven, they can-
not mend their ways.

As he was thus speaking, he
observed divers Flies that came
about him, and some lighted on
him. Behold, said he, now al-
beit Belzebub comes to his Ban-
quet; you shall shortly see my
end, and in me an example to
many, of the Justice and Judg-
ment of God.

I O [since misbegun]
About this time came in
two Bishops, with divers
Scho-

Scholars of the University, one of them being *Paulus Wergerius*, having observed *Spira* more then any other, being continually conversant with him, told him his Estate was such as rather stood in need of Prayer than Advice; and therefore desired him to pray with him in the Lords Prayer: *Spira* consented, and he began;

[*Our father which art in Heaven*] then breaking forth into tears he stopped; but they said, It is well, your grief is a good sign, 'I bewaile (said he) my misery for I perceiue I am forsaken of God, and cannot call to him from my heart, as I was wont to do: Yet let us go on said *Wergerius*.

[*Thy Kingdom come*] O Lord (said *Spira*) bring me also into this Kingdom; I beseech thee
shut

shut me not out. Then coming to those words [*Give us this day our daily bread*] he added, 'O Lord I have enough, and abundance to feed this carcass of mine; but there is another bread I humbly beg, the bread of thy Grace, without which I know I am but a dead man.

Lead us not into temptation] 'seeing Lord, that I am brought into temptation, help me Lord, that I may escape; the enemy hath overcome; help me, I beseech thee to overcome this cruel Tyrant.

These things he spake with a mournful voice, the tears trickling down abundantly; and expressing such affections and passion, as turned the bowels of those there present with grief and compunction: they then turning to *Spira*, said, You know

know that none can call *Christ* *Iesus* the Lord; but by the Holy Ghost: you must therefore think of your self, according to that soft affection, which you express in your Prayers, inferring thereby that God hath not wholly cast you off, or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

“ I perceive said *Spira*, that I call on him to my eternal damnation for I tell you again, it is a new and unheard of example, that you find in me. If *Judas* (said they) had but out-lived his days, which by nature he might have done, he might have repented, and Christ would have received him to mercy; and yet he sinned most grievously against his Master, which did so esteem of him, as to honour him with the dignity of an Apostle, and did maintain
and

and feed him. He answered, Christ did also feed and honour me, neither yet is my fault one jot less then that of his, because it is no more honour to be personally present with Christ in the flesh, then to be in his presence now by illumination of his holy spirit; and besides I deny that ever Judas could have repented how long soever he had lived: for grace was quite taken from him, as it is now from me.

O Spira, said they, you know you are in a spiritual desertion, you must therefore not believe what Satan suggests, he was ever a liar from the beginning, and a meer Imposter, and will cast a thousand lying fancies into your mind, to beguile you withall; you must rather believe

lieve those whom you judge to be in a good estate, and more able to discern of you then your self: believe us, and we tell you that God will be merciful unto you.

There is the knot (said *Spirits*) I would I could believe, but I cannot.

Then he began to reckon up what fearful dreames and visions he was continually troubled withall: that he saw the Devils come flocking into the Chamber, and about his bed, terrifying him with strange noises; that these were not fantasies, but that he saw them as really, as the standers by: and that besides these outward terrors, he felt continually a racking torture of his mind, and a continual butchery of his Conscience, being the very proper pangs

pangs of the damned wights in Hell.

Cast away these fantasies (said *Gribauldus*) these are but illusions : humble your self in the presence of God, and praise him. “ The dead praise not
‘ the Lord (answered he) nor
‘ they that go down into the
‘ pit. We that are drowned in
‘ despair are dead, and already
‘ gone down into the pit ; what
‘ Hell can there be worse than
‘ Desperation, or what greater
‘ punishment ? The gnawing
‘ worm, Unquenchable Fire,
‘ Horror, Confusion and (which
‘ is worse then all) Desperation
‘ it self continually tortures me,
‘ and now I count my present
‘ estate worse, than if my soul
‘ seperated from my body were
‘ with *Judas*, and the rest of the
‘ damned, and therefore, now
‘ desire

‘ desire rather to be there, then
 ‘ thus to live in the body.

One being present repeated certain words out of the Psalms;
*If thy Children forsake my Law
 and walk not in my judgments;
 I will visit their transgressions
 with rods, and their iniquity
 with stripes; nevertheless my
 loving kindness I will not ut-
 terly take from them, nor suffer
 my faithfulness to fail. Mark
 this, O Spira, My Covenant I
 will not break.*

“ These promises (said Spira)
 belong onely to the Elect,
 which if tempted, may fall in-
 to sin, but are again lifted up
 and recovered out: as the
 Prophet saith, though he fall
 he shall not be utterly cast
 down, for the Lord uphold-
 eth him, therefore Peter could
 rise, for he was elected; but
 the

the Reprobate when they fall, cannot rise again, as appears in *Gain, Saul, and Judas*, God deals one way with the Elect, and another with Reprobates.

The next day he prayed with them in the Latine Tongue, and that with excellent affection, as outwardly appeared. Blessed be God, said *Vergerius*, these are no signs of eternal reprobation; you must not, O *Spira*, seek out the secret Counsels of Gods Election and Reprobation; for no man can know, so long as he lives, whether by his good or bad deeds, he be worthy of Gods love or anger: do you not know that the Prophet *David* complained, that God had cast off his soul.

I know all this, quoth Spira, I know the mercies of God are infinite, and do surpass the sins of the whole

54 A relation of the fearful

whole world, and that they are effectual to all that believe, but this faith, and this hope is the gift of God: O that he would give it me! but it is as impossible as to drink up the Sea at a draught: as for that of Solomon, if he had ever tasted that which I feel by wofull experience, he would never have spoken as he did, but the truth is, never had mortall man such an evident experience of Gods anger and hatred against him, as I have. You that are in good estate, think repentance and faith to be a work of great facility: and therefore you think it an easie matter to perswade a man to believe: the whole need not the Physician, and he that is well can soon give counsel to such as are ill: but this is the Hell to me, my heart is hardened, I cannot believe, many are called, but few are chosen.

Upon

Upon what ground (said they) do you conceive so ill an opinion of your self.

"I once did know God to be
'my Father not only by Crea-
'tion, but by regeneration; I
'knew him by his beloved Son,
'the Author and Finisher of our
'Salvation; I could pray to him
'and hope for pardon of sin from
'him; I had a tast of his sweet-
'ness, peace, and comfort; now
'contrarily, I know God, not as
'a Father, but as an Enemy;
'what more? my heart hates
'God, and seeks to get above
'him, I have nothing else to fly
'to but terror and despair.

Belike you think then (said they) that those who have the earnest and first fruits of God's Spirit, may notwithstanding fall away.

The judgments of God are a
deep

deep abyss, said he, we are soon drowned if we enter into them; He that thinketh he standeth, let him take heed lest he fall, as for my self, I know I am fallen back and that I once did know the truth, though it may not be so thoroughly; I know not what to say, but that I am one of that number which God hath threatened to tear in pieces.

Say not so, answered they, for God may come, though at the last hour; keep hold therefore at the last by hope.

This, quoth he, is my case; I tell you I cannot, God hath deprived me of hope, this brings terror to my mind, and pines this body which now is so weak, as it cannot perform the several Offices thereof: for as the Elect have the Spirit testifying that they are the sons of God

God, so the Reprobates, even while they live, do often feel a Worm in their Consciences, whereby they are condemned already: and therefore as I perceived this wound inflicted on my mind and will, I knew that I wanted the gifts of saving grace, and that I was utterly undone. God chastneth his children with temporary afflictions, that they may come as Gold out of the fire; but punisheth the wicked with blindness in their understandings, and hardness of heart; and wo be to such from whom God takes his holy Spirit.

Here one rebuked him, and told him he gave too much credit to sense, that he was not to believe himself, but rather him that was in a good estate; and I testifie to you (said he) that God will be merciful to you.

D

Nay

Nay, answered he, for because I am in this ill Estate, therefore can I believe nothing but what is contrary to my salvation and comfort; but you that are so confident of your good Estate, look that it be true, for it is no such small matter to be assured of sincerity; a man had need be exceeding strongly grounded in the truth, before he can be able to affirm such a matter as ye now do. It is not the performance of a few outward duties, but a mighty constant labour, with all intention of heart and affection, with full desire and endeavour continually to set forth Gods glory; there must be neither fear of Legators, Inquisitors, Prisons, nor any death whatsoever; many think themselves happy, that are not, it is not every one that saith Lord, Lord, that shall go to Heaven.

Then

They came another day, and found him with his eyes shut, as if he had been drowzie and very loath to discourse; at which time there came in also a grave man from *Citadella*, who demanded of *Spira*, if he knew him or not. He lifting up his eye-lids, and not suddenly remembering him, the man said to him, *I am Presbiter Antonie Fontamia*, I was with you at *Venice* some 8 weeks since; 'O cursed day said *Spira*! Oh cursed day! Oh that I had never gone thither! Would God I had then died.

Afterwards came in a Priest, called *Bernardius Sardonius*, bringing with him a Book of Exorcisms to conjure this Devil; whom when *Spira* saw, shaking his head he said:

'I am verily Perswaded indeed

D 2

'that

that God hath left me to the power of the Devil : but such they are , as are not to be found in your Letany ; neither will they be cast out by spells. The Priest proceeding in his intended purpose , with a strange uncouth gesture , and a loud voice , adjured the spirit to come into *Spira's* tongue , and to answer : *Spira* deriding his fruitless labour , with a sigh , turned from him ; a Bishop being there present said to *Spira* . brother , God hath put vertue into the Word and Sacraments ; and we have used the one means , and find not that effect which we desire ; shall we try the efficacy of the Sacraments ? surely if you take it as a true Christian ought to receive the body and blood of Christ , it will prove a soveraign medicine for your sick soul.

This

‘ This I cannot do (answered
 ‘ he) for they that have no right
 ‘ to the promises, have no right
 ‘ to the seals. The Eucharist
 ‘ was appointed onely for believ-
 ‘ ers if we have not faith, we eat
 ‘ and drink judgement to our
 ‘ selves. I receiv’d it about a month
 ‘ since, but I did not well in so
 ‘ doing; for I took it by constraint,
 ‘ and so I took it to my deeper
 ‘ condemnation.

Here *Vergerius* began to im-
 portune him earnestly to be-
 ware that he did not wilfully
 to resist grace, and put himself
 out of Heaven, charging him
 vehemently, by all the love
 that was between them. by the
 love that he bare to his chil-
 dren, yea to his own soul,
 that he would set himself seri-
 ously to return to that Faith
 and hope, which once he had

in the death of Christ; with many such like words. *Spira* having heard much of the like matter formerly; and being somewhat moved said, You do but repeat, *Vergerius*, what should I hope? why should I believe? God hath taken faith from me; shew me then whither I shall go shew me a Heaven whereto I shall retire. You tell me of God's mercy, when as God hath cast me off; you tell me of Christs intercession, I have denied him; you command me to believe, I say I cannot; you bring me no comfort, your command is as impossible for me to obey, as to keep Moral Law: if you should perswade one to love God with all his heart soul and strength, and God gives him not power, can he perform your desire? Doth not the Church teach us to sing, *Di-*
rect

rect us, O Lord, to keep thy Com-
 mandments? Hypocrites say that
 they love God with all their heart,
 but they lie; for my part I will
 not lie, but tell you plainly; Such
 is my case, that though you should
 never so much importune me to
 hope or believe, though I desire it,
 yet I cannot, for God vs a punish-
 ment of my wickedness, hath ta-
 ken away from me all his saving
 graces, faith, hope, and all: I am
 not the man therefore that you
 take me for: Belike you think I
 delight in this Estate; if I could
 conceive but the least spark of
 hope of a better Estate hereafter,
 I would not refuse to endure the
 most heavy weight of the wrath of
 that great God, yea, for twenty
 thousand years, so that I might at
 length attain to the end of that
 misery, which I now know will be
 eternal, But I tell you, my will

is wound, who longs more to believe then I do? but all the ground-work of hope is gone, for if the Testimonies of holy Scripture be true (as they are certainly true) is not this as true, whosoever denies me before men, him *saith Christ*, will I deny before my Father which is in heaven? is not this justly my case as if it had been intended against this very person of mine. And I pray you what shall become of such as *Christ denieth*, seeing there is no other name under heaven whereby you look to be saved? What *saith St. Paul* to the *Hebrews*? It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, & were partakers of the holy Ghost, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance, what can be more plain
against

against me? is not that Scripture also; if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a looking for of judgment: the Scripture speaks of me, *St. Paul* meets me, *Saint Peter* tells me, it had been better I had never known the way of righteousness, then after I have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment, it had been better I had not known, and yet then my condemnation had been most certain; do you not see evidently, that I have wilfully denied the known truth; I may justly expect not only damnation, but worse if worse may be imagined, God will have me undergoe the just punishment of my sin, and make me an example of his wrath for your sakes.

The Company present admired his discourse, so grievously accusing himself of his fore-past life, so gravely and wisely dilating concerning the Judgements of God, that they then were convinced, that it was not Frenzie or Madnes that had possessed him, and being as it were in admiration of his Estate, *Spira* proceeded again in this manner. 'Take heed to your selves; it is no light or easie matter to be a Christian; it is not Baptism or reading of the Scriptures, or boasting of faith in Christ, (though even these are good) that can prove one to be an absolute Christian: you know what I said before, there must be a conformity in life. A Christian must be strong, unconquerable, not carrying an

an obscure profession, but resolve, expressing the image of Christ, and holding out against all opposition to the last breath, he must give all diligence, by Righteousness and Holiness, to make his calling and Election sure. Many there are that snatch at the Promises in the Gospel, as if they undoubtedly did belong to them, and yet they remain sluggish, and careless; and being flattered by the things of this present world, they pass in their course in quietness and security, as if they were the only happy men; whom nevertheless the Lord in his providence hath ordained to eternal wrath, as you may see in Saint *Lukes* Rich Man. Thus it was with me, therefore take ye heed.

Then

Then came one of his Nephews, and offered him some sustenance, which he disdainfully refusing, so moved the young mans scholar, that he charged him with hypocrisie and dissimulation, or frenzy; to whom *Spira* gravely answering, said,

You may interpret the matter as you will: but I am sure I am not only the Actor, but the Argument and matter of the Tragedie, I would it were frenzy either fained or true, for if it were frenzy I could put it off at pleasure; if it were a real frenzy, yet there were some hope left of Gods mercy, whereas now there is none. For I know God hath pronounced me an enemy and guilty of high treason against his Majesty; I am a cast-away, a vessel of his wrath: yet dare

dare you call it dissembling and frenzy? and can you mock at the formidable example of the heavy wrath of God, that should teach you fear and terror: But it is natural to the flesh, either out of malice or ignorance, to speak perversely of the works of God. The natural man discerneth not the things that be of God, because they are spiritually discerned.

How can this be (saith Gri-bauldus) that you can thus excellently discourse of the judgment of God, and of the graces of his holy Spirit, that you find the want of them; and earnestly desire them; and yet you think you are utterly deprived of them.

Take this for certain (saith he) want the main grace of all, and that which is absolutely necessary, and God doth many times exhort
most

most true and strange testimonies of his majesty, justice and mercy; yea, out of the mouthes of very reprobates: for even Judas, after he had betrayed his Master, was constrained to confess his sin, and to justifie the innocency of Christ and therefore if I do the like, it is no new or strange matter. God hath taken Faith from me, & left me other common gifts, for my deeper condemnation: By how much the more I remember what I had, and hear others discourse of what they have, by so much the more is my torment, in that I know what I want, and how there is no way to be relieved.

Thus spake he, the tears all the while trickling down; professing that his pangs were such, as that the damned Wights in Hell endure not the like misery; that his estate was worse

worse then that of Cain or Judas, and therefore he desired to die. Yet behold (saith he) the Scriptures are accomplished in me, They shall desire to die, and Death shall fly from them. And verily, he seemed exceedingly to fear, lest his life should be drawn out to a longer thred; and finding no ease or rest, ever and anon, cried out, O miserable wretch, O miserable wretch; then turning to the Company, he besought them in this manner-

O Brethren! take a diligent heed to your life; make more account of the gifts of Gods Spirit then I have done; learn to beware of my misery; think not you are assured Christians, because you understand something of the Gospel; take heed you grow not secure on that ground; be constant and immovable

moveable in the maintenance of your profession: Confess even until death, if you be called thereto; he that loveth Father, and Mother, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, kindreds, houses, lands, more then Christ, is not worthy of him.

These words (saied they) do not sound like the words of a wicked reprobate.

I do but here imitate (saith) Spira) the rich glutton in the Gospel, who though in Hell, yet was careful that his brethren should not come to that place of torment: And I say to you brethren, take heed of this miserable estate wherein I am.

Then turning himself to certain young men that were present, he desired them to conceive him aright. 'I do not speak
' this to derogate from the cer-
' tainty of saving faith, and the
promises

74 *A relation of the Fearful*

merits from the flood of Gods
wrath, even as with a mighty
wall, lest miserable mortals
should be swallowed up with
greatness of their sin: but as
for me, I have as it were wil-
fully with my hands pulled
down this Rampire, behind
which I might have rested in
safety; and now are the swell-
ing Waters come even to my
soul, and I am cast away.

One of his familiar Friends
chanced to say, That certainly
he was overcome with melan-
choly; which being over-heard,
Spira answered.

*well, be it so, seeing you will
needs have it so; thus also is Gods
wrath manifested against me, in
that he hath taken from me the
use of mine Understanding and
Reason, so as I can neither rightly
esteem and judge of my distemper,*

nor

nor hope of remedy. You see Brethren, what a dangerous thing it is to stop or stay in things that concern Gods glory, especially to dissemble upon any terms: What a fearful thing is it to be near, & almost a Christian? Never was the like example to this of mine, and therefore, if you be wise, you will seriously consider thereof. O that God would let loose his hand from me, that it were with me now as in times past, I would scorn the threats of the most cruel Tyrants, bear torments with invincible resolution, and glory in the outward profession of Christ, till I were choaked in the flame, and my body consumed to ashes.

You say you are desperate, O Spira! (said they) why then do you not strive with some weapon or other, violently to make an end of your life, as
despe-

desperate men use to do? Let me have a sword (said Spira) Why what would you do with it (quoth they?) I cannot tell you (said he) what this mind would move me to, upon occasion, nor what I would do.

They perceiving small effect of all this their labour, but rather that he grew worse, for the avoiding of concourse of people; for every day seldome fewer then twenty continued with him, and to stop the course of fame which was continually blown abroad of him, they consult to carry him back again into his own Country; and those his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their leaves of him; *Vergerius* amongst the rest, required that at their parting they might pray together with him,

him, Spira hardly consented, and as unwillingly performed, for he said, *My heart is estranged from God, I cannot call him Father from my heart; all good motions are now quite gone, my heart is full of malediction, hatred, and blasphemy against God: I find I grow more and more hardened in heart, and cannot stop nor help myself; your prayers for me shall turn to your own profit, they can do me no good.*

Vergerius came to take his leave of him, whom Spira embracing, said, *Although I know that nothing can bring any benefit to me a reprobate; but that every thing shall tend to my deeper condemnation: yet I give you most hearty thanks for your kind office of love and good will; and the Lord return it unto you*

you, with a plentiful increase of all good.

The next day being brought down to his intended journey, by the way looking round about him with a ghastly look, he saw a knife lying on a table, to which he running hastily, snatched hold of it, as intending to mischief himself; but his friends laying hold of him, stopped him in his purpose: whereupon with indignation he said, *I would I were above God, for I know he will have no mercy on me.*

Thus went he homewards, often saying, that he envied the condition of Cain and Judas: He lay about eight weeks in this case, in a continual burning, neither desiring, nor receiving any thing but by force, and that without digestion

stion, so spent, that he appeared a perfect Anatomie, expressing to the view nothing but sinews and bones; vehemently raging for drink, ever pining, yet fearful to live long; dreadful of Hell, yet coveting death; in a continual torment, yet his own Tormentor. And thus consuming himself with grief and horror, impatience and despair, like a living man in Hell, he represented an extraordinary example of the justice and power of God. And thus (as far as appeareth) within a few dayes after his arrival at his own home, he departed this present life. Yet an occasion to make us remember, *That secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but charity to men, to teach him to hope all things.*

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